

The Engaging Young People in Consultations (EYPiC) Toolkit

Supporting the Participation of Young People in Local Decision-Making

2025



The toolkit was produced by Dr Gemma Bridge, with support from Bernard Fanning, young people across the UK, and representatives from local authorities and community organisations, as an output from the EYPiC project ([EYPiC Homepage \(super.site\)](http://EYPiC.Homepage.super.site))



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Who is the EYPiC toolkit for?

This toolkit **includes two resources**, 1) *The EYPiC Framework*– a check list and step by step guide to promote the engagement of young people in local decision making, and 2) The EYPiC

Evaluation and Reflection tool- a four part tool to support ongoing improvement in engagement.

The toolkit has been **designed for any organisation and/or individual involved in consulting with the public**, including but not limited to, local authorities, universities, consultancies, and charitable organisations.

The toolkit **aims to provide clear, actionable steps that organisations can take to foster trust, accessibility, and sustained engagement**, helping to move participation efforts beyond one-off consultations towards long-term, full involvement, ultimately, supporting organisations in engaging with, listening to, and acting on young people's views.

Whilst the toolkit has been developed for organisations conducting consultations in England, it is likely to be useful for those undertaking consultations in a range of contexts and countries. This toolkit was developed as part of a research project **funded by Rees Jeffreys Road Fund**.

Why do we need to engage young people engage in local decision making?

Public consultations are the main way that communities can get involved in decision-making in local areas. However, due to a lack of time, resource, or clarity on how to achieve meaningful participation and engagement, **many consultations are a "window-dressing ritual"**, where people are invited to share their views, but these views do not impact decisions. This problem was identified over 50 years ago, and yet, **lots of people are still excluded from shaping the policies and plans that affect their lives.**

There are **numerous reasons for this ongoing disengagement**: lack of trust in local government, limited awareness of consultations, time constraints, and inadequate efforts to make participation truly inclusive (Barratt et al., 2015; Baxter et al., 2023). But change is possible. **We all need to take proactive steps** to remove barriers and create pathways for participation.

We can aim for, what Arnstein (1969) called "Partnership", where **power is genuinely shared between decision-makers and the public**. This means promoting long-term engagement, ensuring that consultation outcomes translate into meaningful change, and providing accessible, inclusive platforms for participation.

While everyone should be engaged in decision-making, **this toolkit focuses specifically on supporting the full participation of young people aged 18-25**. Young people are often overlooked in consultations, despite being heavily impacted by policy decisions on issues such as transport, housing, and climate change.

By embedding inclusive practices and prioritising engagement, we can **help young people to engage and also promote broader community participation**. This will enhance transparency, accountability, and equity, particularly for historically underrepresented groups (Bell and Reed, 2022). If young people are fully engaged today, we can help **shift local decision-making from top-down consultation to collaborative governance**, giving communities real agency over the places where they live, work, and play.

How was the EYPiC Toolkit developed?

The EYPiC framework and the EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection tool are **evidence informed tools** developed through a reflective and research-informed process. Both tools were developed using **insights from young people and consultation professionals**.

The tools also build on and utilise insights from **established frameworks of participation** including **Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation** (Arnstein, 1969) which highlights the importance of moving away from tokenistic consultation, the **Lundy Model of Participation** (2007) which emphasises the need to move beyond consultation towards genuine influence and the **Tree of Participation** (Bell and Reed, 2022) which highlights the conditions needed for engagement, including creating safe spaces, ensuring inclusivity, and identifying and overcoming barriers (such as cost, language, and cultural differences), as well as the importance of socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional contexts, and recognising how power dynamics, knowledge systems, and decision-making structures influence engagement outcomes (Reed et al., 2018).

More information about how the EYPiC framework and the EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection tool were developed is available to read in *Appendix A. How was this toolkit developed?*

The EYPiC Framework

The EYPiC framework has 5 ‘prongs’: space, voice, audience, influence, and evaluation and reflection (see Figure 1). These prongs build on Lundy’s Model of Participation (Lundy, 2007), as well as the ideas and insights shared by young people and local authority consultation staff, summarised in [*Appendix B. The EYPiC recommendations*](#).

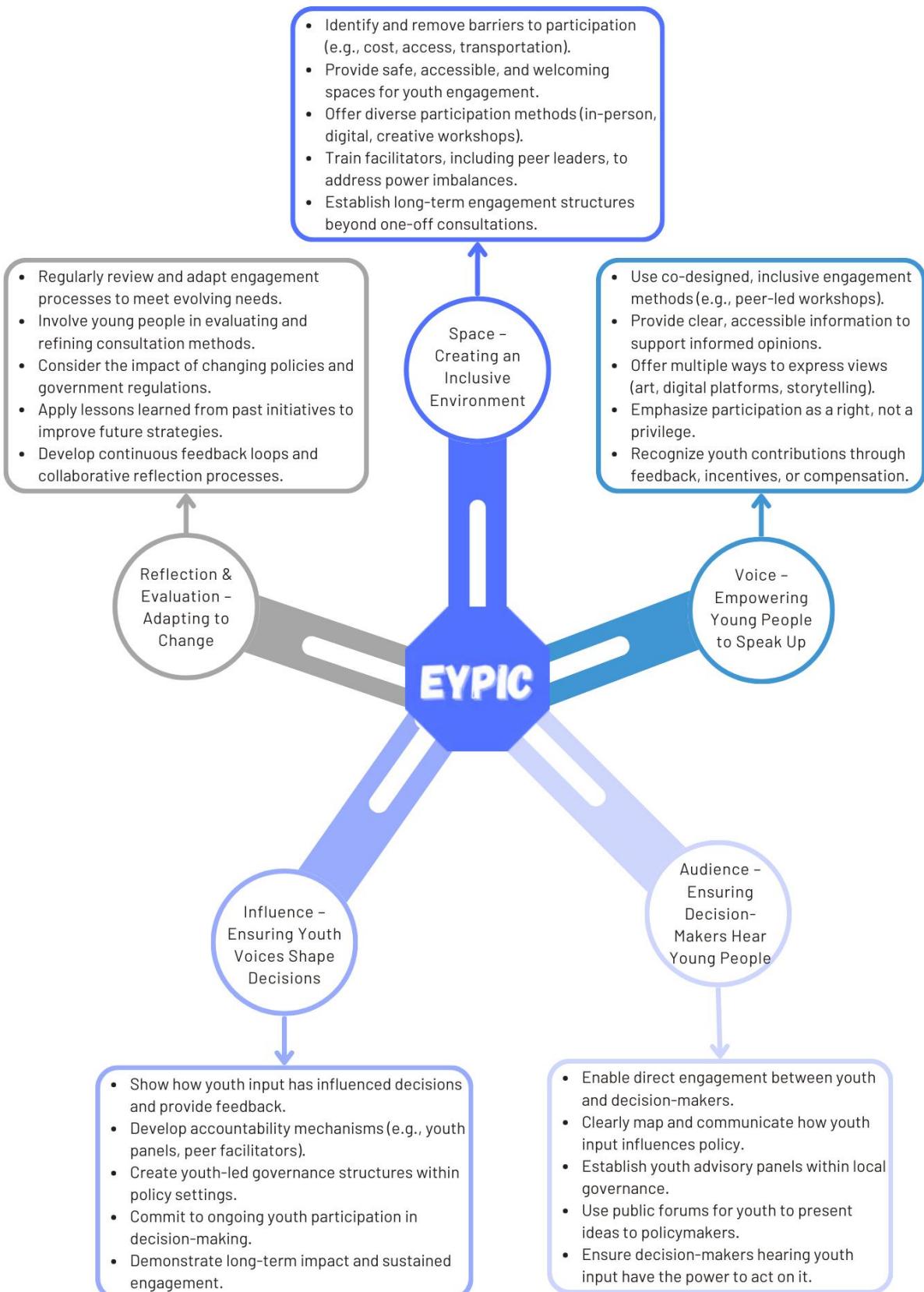
Each ‘prong’ of the EYPiC Framework includes key factors to consider when planning consultations, and when looking to engage young people in local consultations.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the EYPiC Framework, which can be used as a quick, visual reminder of the range of factors that need to be considered when planning a consultation.

For more detail on each of the 5 prongs, and the factors that they include, see: [*Appendix C. The EYPiC framework – the 5 prongs, and key factors to consider*](#).

To help you and your team in putting the EYPiC Framework into practice, see: [*Implementing the EYPiC Framework – A checklist*](#), for a list that you can work through and tick off as you plan and progress each consultation.

Figure 1. The EYPiC framework



Implementing the EYPiC Framework – A checklist

Use this checklist to embed young people's participation as a core pillar of decision-making. A flow chart to help with the decisions needed to support the engagement of young people can be seen in Figure 2.

1. Develop a Local Engagement Plan with Young People

- Recognise that young people are diverse—identify and remove barriers to participation (e.g., cost, transport, digital exclusion).
- Use demographic data to identify underrepresented communities and ensure equitable participation.
- Co-design engagement with young people—ask when, where, and how they want to participate.
- Choose safe, culturally relevant, accessible locations with strong transport links and walking/wheeling access.
- Schedule consultations at convenient times (e.g., after school, weekends, holidays) to increase accessibility.
- Use online and social media platforms to reach young people unable or uncomfortable attending in person.
- Work with youth ambassadors, community groups, and local influencers to amplify consultation messages.

2. Provide Training for Staff on Meaningful Youth Participation

- Train staff in youth-friendly facilitation techniques, active listening, and power-sharing approaches.
- Equip facilitators with interactive consultation tools (e.g., participatory mapping, augmented reality, gamified apps).
- Use visual, creative, and multilingual communication methods to simplify complex consultation topics.
- Train peer facilitators from diverse communities to promote trust and inclusive dialogue.
- Ensure a diverse facilitator team (gender, ethnicity, background) to encourage balanced engagement.

3. Set Clear Feedback Mechanisms

- Clearly map and communicate how the input of young people influences decision-making processes.
- Use social media, websites, and infographics to share consultation outcomes.
- Provide multilingual summaries and use storytelling techniques to make findings accessible.
- Establish a youth advisory panel to oversee the implementation of recommendations.
- Ensure decision-makers report back on how youth contributions have shaped final decisions.

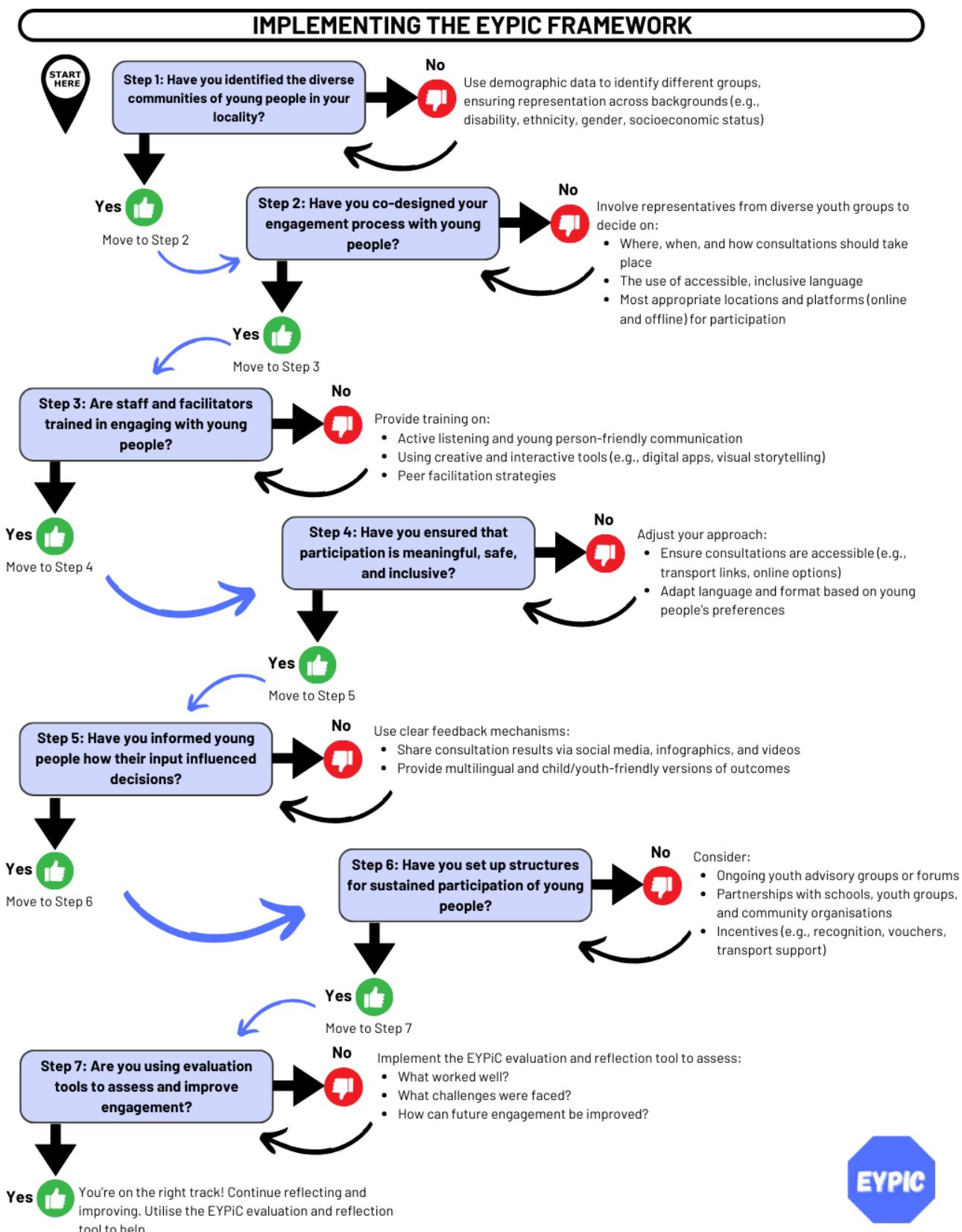
4. Commit to Long-Term Engagement

- Establish sustained participation structures (e.g., youth advisory boards, participatory budgeting).
- Recognise young people's contributions through certificates, leadership opportunities, and incentives (e.g., vouchers, transport support).
- Work with young people to co-create a dedicated consultation website with real-time updates.
- Partner with schools, colleges, universities, and youth groups to embed engagement into long-term strategies.
- Move beyond consultation to shared decision-making, integrating young people into governance processes.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Participation Efforts

- Gather young people's feedback on the consultation process—what worked, what didn't?
- Regularly assess and adapt strategies based on evaluation findings.
- Share learnings with other organisations to promote best practices in engagement.
- Use *The EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection tool*, to systematically review and refine consultation efforts.
- Consider political, regulatory, and community shifts—adjust engagement strategies accordingly.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, ensuring that engagement with young people evolves.

Figure 2. Implementing the EYPiC framework - a decision tree



The EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection tool

The EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection tool is designed to help local authorities reflect on, evaluate, and improve their consultation processes with young people (ages 18-25). The questions in the tool can be worked through at the end of each consultation, or reflective notes can be made as consultations are planned and carried out. By using this tool, you can identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement to ensure meaningful engagement of young people in local decision-making.

For a visual summary of the EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection tool, see Figure 3.

Consultation Overview

- Consultation Title:
- Date(s) Conducted:
- Lead Organisation(s):
- Location of Consultation(s):
- Target Audience:
- Key Objectives of Consultation:
- Consultation method(s) used (e.g. survey, focus group, social media, drop in session):

Engagement & Inclusivity

Accessibility and representation

- Was the consultation promoted widely to diverse communities of young people, and via diverse methods? (Yes/No)
- Which groups, if any, were specifically targeted? State all.
- Were engagement methods tailored to different accessibility needs? (Yes/No)
- What action(s) could be undertaken to improve accessibility for future consultations?

Young People's Involvement

- Were young people involved in planning the consultation? (Yes/No)
- Were young person facilitators or peer ambassadors used? (Yes/No)
- Were young people incentivized to participate? (Yes/No)
- If yes, what incentives were used (e.g., vouchers, certificates, leadership opportunities):

Continued page 11.

Communication & Transparency

Clarity of process

- Was clear, accessible information provided before and during the consultation? (Yes/No)
- How was information communicated (e.g. in person, via email, in a newsletter)?

Feedback and impact

- Was follow-up feedback provided to participants? (Yes/No)
- How was the impact of young person input communicated?
- What action could be taken to improve feedback mechanisms for future consultations?

Influence and Decision-Making

Integration of young people's voices

- Did young people's input shape the final decision? (Yes/No)
- If no, what were the key barriers? (e.g. time, lack of numbers, other ideas had more support)

Accountability and follow up

- Were decision-makers involved in discussions with young people? (Yes/No)
- Is there a mechanism in place for youth to challenge or revisit decisions? (Yes/No)
- What action could be taken to improve responsiveness of decision-makers to concerns?

Reflection and Continuous Improvement

Lessons learned

- What worked well in this consultation?
- What challenges were encountered?
- How could future consultations be improved?

Long term strategy

- Will this consultation lead to ongoing engagement with young people? (Yes/No)
- If yes, describe how:
- If no, what are the barriers to sustained engagement?

Final Reflections

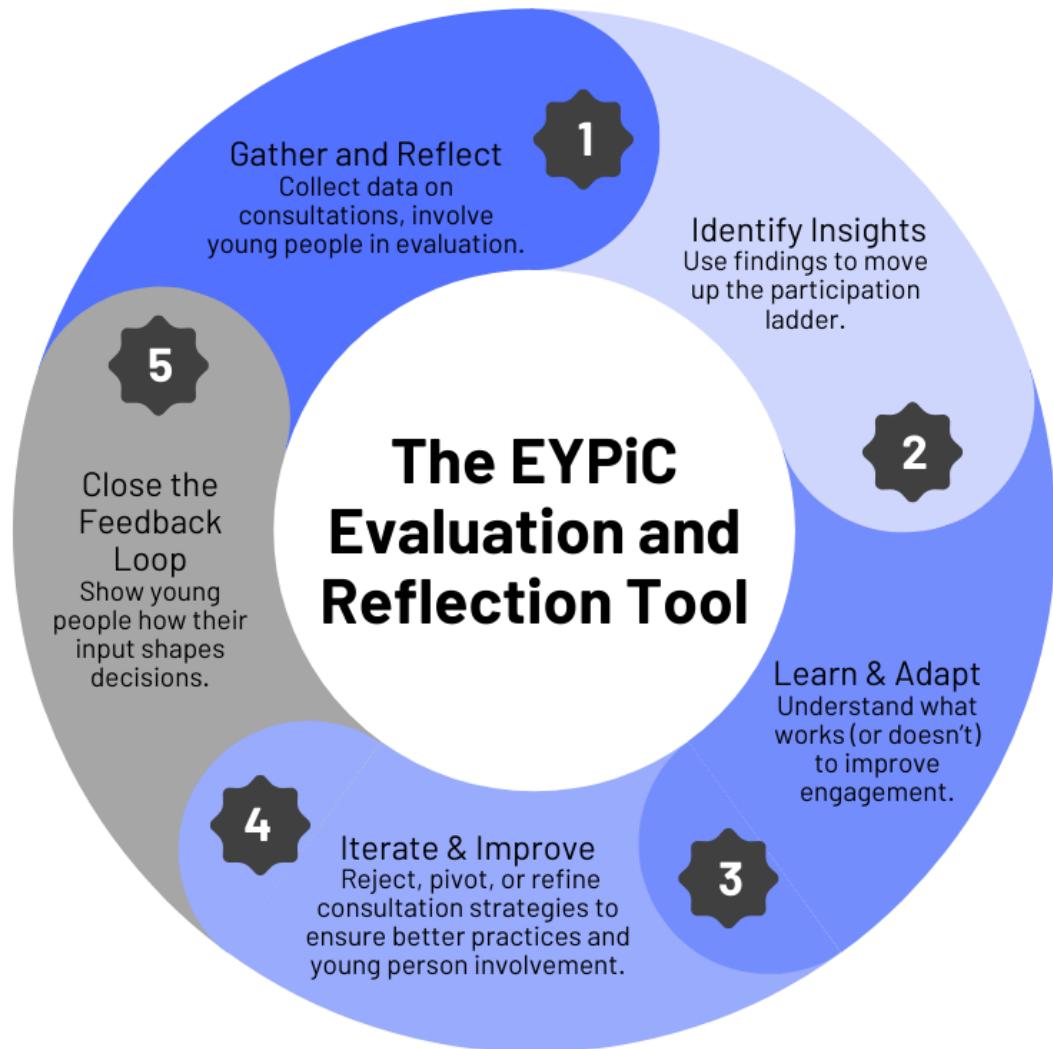
- What is one key takeaway from this consultation?
- What is one action point for the next consultation to promote the improved and ongoing engagement of young people?
- Have there been any political, regulatory, or community shifts that may impact future engagement strategies? (Yes/No)
- If yes, how will these changes be considered in future consultation planning?

Why are reflection and evaluation needed?

Reflection and evaluation are essential to ensuring that the engagement of young people in local decision-making moves toward meaningful participation. It is important that consultation strategies undergo continuous testing, adaptation, and improvement to create more inclusive and effective consultation processes.

By systematically analysing what worked, what didn't, and where power dynamics can shift, local authorities can take deliberate actions to embed the voices of young people into decision-making structures. This cycle of small actions, testing, and refinement ensures that engagement strategies evolve over time, fostering a culture of ongoing learning, development, and change.

Figure 3. The EYPiC Evaluation and Reflection Tool



Glossary of terms used in this toolkit

Accessibility: Ensuring consultations are held at times, locations, and formats that young people can easily access. This includes providing online options, considering transportation needs, and ensuring that those with disabilities and/or those who do not have English as a first language are catered for.

EYPiC: Engaging Young People in Consultations. A project funded by Rees Jeffrey's Road Fund to explore and promote the engagement of young people (aged 18-25) in local decision making.

Feedback: The provision of participants with information on how their input was considered and used in decision-making processes. Feedback can support engagement by showing young people that their contributions are valued and impactful, which encourages continued participation in future consultations.

Incentives: Provide young people with rewards such as food vouchers, travel discounts or prizes before or after consultations to motivate young people to participate. Incentives can help overcome apathy and/or acknowledge the time and effort required to take part in a consultation.

Interactive Methods: The use of techniques such as games, quizzes, or workshops designed to make consultations more engaging for young people. These methods can encourage active involvement and help to make consultations more enjoyable.

Peer Facilitators: Young people who lead or help facilitate discussions among their peers during consultations. Peer facilitators create a more comfortable and relatable environment for participants.

Social Media Engagement: The use of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and X(Twitter) to connect with young people enabling for real-time interaction, feedback, and promotion of consultation opportunities.

Young Person-Friendly Language: Using clear, simple language that is relatable to young people. Avoiding jargon makes consultation topics easier for youth to understand and engage with.

What if I have a question or need some more help?

We are always eager to hear from those using this toolkit. Whether you have questions about how to implement the recommendations, ideas for improving engagement, or feedback on your experience with the toolkit, we would love to hear from you. Your insights and suggestions can help us refine the toolkit further and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of local authorities and organisations striving to engage young people.

Please get in touch with us via the following:

- Email: eypic.consult@gmail.com
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13039069/>
- Website: <https://eypic.super.site/>

Appendices

Appendix A. How was this toolkit developed?

To develop the content for this toolkit, a three-phase project was conducted. More information about the wider research behind this toolkit is available to view on the [EYPiC website](#). In phase 1, we undertook an exploratory study to gather insights about young people's perspectives and experiences of consultations through online surveys and focus groups, and to capture the challenges that consultation professionals face in engaging young people in consultations, which we did via online interviews. This work was part of the Future Transport Vision Group competition (2023/2024).

In phase 2, we built on our earlier work, and spoke with local authorities in England, to capture more insights into the challenges faced in engaging young people, and what efforts have been made to improve engagement. We used these insights to develop the reflection and evaluation tool, that we aim will support the ongoing improvement and development of consultation practices across England and beyond.

In phase 3, we reflected on the insights that we had gathered across the earlier phases and developed the EYPiC framework. The Framework brings together earlier frameworks of engagement and participation, and seeks to support local authorities, and other organisations working in this space, to fully engage with young people.

Appendix B. The EYPiC recommendations

The 10 EYPiC recommendations were co-developed by young people across England and local authority consultation staff. They form the basis of the EYPiC framework.



Appendix C. The EYPiC framework – the 5 prongs, and key factors to consider

Space – Creating an Inclusive Environment

- Consider what different communities exist within your locality. Identify groups that may be marginalised, and remove barriers to participation (e.g., cost, digital access, transportation).
- Identify and remove structural and socioeconomic barriers to engagement (e.g., cost, transport, digital access).
- Ensure safe, accessible, and welcoming spaces for the engagement of young people in local decision making.
- Offer multiple participation methods (in-person, digital, creative workshops)
- Provide training for staff on effective engagement with young people in their communities.
- Provide trained facilitators to manage power imbalances between youth and decision-makers. To achieve this, peer facilitator could be recruited and trained.
- Establish long-term, structured participation mechanisms rather than one-off consultations.

Voice – Empowering Young People to Speak Up

- Recognise diverse knowledge systems—value lived experiences, local expertise, and alternative perspectives.
- Use co-designed engagement methods (e.g., peer-led workshops).
- Provide clear, accessible information so young people can form informed opinions.
- Provide multiple ways to express views (art, storytelling, digital engagement, etc.).
- Emphasise that participation is voluntary and meaningful.
- Frame participation as a right, rather than a privilege.
- Address unequal power relations by enabling peer-led facilitation and ensuring decision-makers actively listen.
- Acknowledge the involvement of young people, providing feedback, incentives, and appropriate compensation, where needed
- Allow enough time for deep, reflective engagement with diverse groups of young people, avoiding rushed consultations.

Audience – Ensuring Decision-Makers Hear Young People

- Enable young people to engage directly with decision-makers
- Clearly map out how input from young people informs policy decisions, share this with young people, and decision makers.
- Implement youth advisory panels within local governments.
- Use public forums where youth speak directly to policymakers.
- Inform young people who their views are reaching, how they are being shared, and how their views and ideas will be used
- Ensure those hearing young people's views have the power to implement changes

Influence – Ensuring Youth Voices Shape Decisions

- Demonstrate where and how young people’s views and ideas influenced decisions, make sure this is fed back to young people, and the organisations involved in engaging with them.
- Provide feedback on why specific suggestions were (or weren’t) implemented
- Establish mechanisms for accountability with young people (e.g., youth advisory panels, or peer facilitators), allowing young people to challenge or refine decisions.
- Develop youth-led governance structures (e.g., youth representatives in policy meetings).
- Showcase long-term impact and commitment to ongoing participation of young people in local decision making.

Reflection & Evaluation – Adapting to Change

- Regularly review and adjust consultation processes to meet evolving community needs.
- Involve young people in evaluating past initiatives to improve future engagement.
- Consider how shifts in government policies and regulations may impact youth participation, and local requirements to engage with diverse audiences.
- Ensure that learning from previous experiences informs future strategies. Share learning experiences with other organisations to promote shared improvement and knowledge transfer.
- Institutionalise reflective practice—support organisational culture shifts towards participatory governance.
- Develop mechanisms for ongoing reflection and improvement, integrating feedback loops.
- Collaborate with young people to ensure their insights are built into reflection and evaluation processes.
- Embed the engagement of young people within organisational culture and governance structures.